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SIXTH UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON
THE STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL
NAMES
New York, 25 August-3 September 1992
Item 6 (e) of the provisional agenda*

TOPONYMIC DATA FILES: NATIONAL GAZETTEERS

Questionnaire on toponymic databases

COMMUNICATION, DATED 12 MARCH 1992, FROM HELEN KERFOOT, TEMPORARY CONVENOR OF THE WORKING GROUP ON TOPONYMIC DATA FILES AND GAZETTEERS OF THE UNITED NATIONS GROUP OF EXPERTS ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES, ADDRESSED TO:

(a) MEMBERS OF THE UNITED NATIONS GROUP OF EXPERTS ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES;

(b) NATIONAL GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES AUTHORITIES;

(c) NATIONAL CARTOGRAPHICAL ORGANIZATIONS

1. The Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers convened in Geneva in November 1991 during the meeting of the Group of Experts on Geographical Names.

2. It was generally agreed by members present, that before the Working Group could make major recommendations, it was necessary to know what types of national toponymic databases already existed; what information they included and how it was gathered and updated; and, if the databases were automated, how the toponymic data were stored and disseminated. To gather that material, the Working Group decided to initiate a questionnaire, which it was hoped could be widely distributed in English, French and Spanish) and would be answered by as many authorities as possible.

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3. The information gathered should help the Group of Experts in various ways. It will enable them to:

(a) Assist those who need to develop automated toponymic databases;

(b) Cooperate on common data fields to be universally maintained (stored and updated);

(c) Collaborate to develop practical mechanisms for exchange of toponymic data between national databases;

(d) Work towards the acceptance and general use of international standards for data storage and exchange;

(e) Encourage the use of national toponymic databases for national gazetteer programmes.

4. The Convenor thanks Ms. Anki Mattisson of the National Land Survey of Sweden for her leadership in creating this questionnaire. The completed pages should be returned to her by 1 May 1992. Her address and fax number are given on the last page of the questionnaire.

5. It is the intention of the Working Group to have, at least, a preliminary report prepared by 1 June, so that this summary information may be available to all who attend the Sixth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names when it meets in New York in late August 1992.

6. While it may not be possible for everyone to complete the questionnaire by May, a later response either sent by mail or brought to the Sixth Conference in New York, will still be valuable.

7. The interest and cooperation of members of the Group of Experts are greatly appreciated by the Working Group which looks forward to collaborating with all respondents in the near future.

United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names

QUESTIONNAIRE ON TOPONYMIC DATABASES

(Note: A separate form should be completed for each database, digital or card system. If you do not yet have a geographical names database, please turn to section H below.)

A. IDENTIFICATION

1. Country

2. Title of the database

3. Manager/Owner (federal department, federal or local agency, university etc.)

4. Contact person(s)

Information submitted by

Name _____

Position _____

Department, agency, etc. _____

_____

Postal address _____

_____

Phone _____

Fax _____

Electronic access number: E-mail _____

Second contact

Name _____

Position _____

Department, agency, etc. _____

_____

Postal address _____

_____

Phone _____

Fax _____

Electronic access number: E-mail _____

B. STATUS

1. Areal coverage

(a) Identify the geographic area which is or will be covered by the toponymic database

(b) Have you compiled at least some information for the entire area identified in (a)?

|_| Yes

|_| No

If "no", indicate which areas are covered and which are not:

Areas covered: _____

Areas not covered: _____

(c) Is the coverage uniform?

|_| Yes

|_| No

If "no", indicate why

2. Status of the geographical names

(a) Are the geographical names officially treated by a national names authority?

|_| Yes

|_| No

If the name is "yes", please provide the name of the authority

3. Is it a digital toponymic database?

|_| Yes

|_| No

|_| Partial

If "no", are there plans for development of a digital database?

|_| Yes

|_| No

C. DESCRIPTION

1. Collection (sources from which names are recorded)

|_| Official maps/charts Scale(s): _____

|_| Field work (whether or not in connection with map production)

|_| Historical material

|_| Gazetteers

|_| Unofficial maps

|_| Text materials

|_| Other sources Specify _____

2. What are the (main) fields of information in your database?

- [ ] Type of feature
- [ ] Source(s) of name
- [ ] Map(s)/chart(s) Scale(s): _____
- [ ] Coordinates
- [ ] Status of the name
- [ ] Date(s) of standardization of name
- [ ] Administrative units
- [ ] Variant names
- [ ] Language(s)
- [ ] Population
- [ ] Extension of features
- [ ] Length (of rivers)
- [ ] Name origins
- [ ] Others Specify _____

_____

Total number of fields that might be recorded from one record: _____

D. UPDATING OF TOPONYIC DATABASES

1. Updating process

- [ ] No updating
- [ ] Continuous
- [ ] Periodical updating

Describe:

2. Sources of updates

|_| National names authority

|_| Published maps/charts

|_| Field work

|_| Other Specify _____

E. OTHER MATTERS

1. Is your toponymic database produced for

|_| Creation of a national gazetteer

|_| Map-making

|_| Research

|_| Other purpose(s) Examples _____

2. If your database is used for a national gazetteer, is the gazetteer created according to the recommendations given in the resolutions of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names on national gazetteers (I/4 (E) and III/2)?

|_| Yes

|_| No

3. Have you published a gazetteer based on your toponymic database?

|_| Yes

|_| No

4. Are your geographical names written in the roman alphabet?

|_| Yes

|_| No

If "yes", please address questions (a) to (d), if "no", move on to question 5.

(a) Are there any diacritical signs in your names?

|_| Yes

|_| No

(b) If your answer to (a) is "yes", please give examples to indicate complexity.

Language(s)	Examples
Language(s)	Examples
Language(s)	Examples

(c) Can you input and store in your database all your geographical names that are written in the roman alphabet?

|_| Yes Describe:

|_| No Explain:

(d) If your answer to (a) and (c) is "yes", how have you solved the problems of

On-screen viewing

Printing

Exchange of data

5. What writing system(s), other than the roman alphabet, do you use for geographical names records?

(a) Are they computerized?

|_| Yes

|_| No

F. TECHNICAL MATTERS OF DIGITAL TOPONYMIC SYSTEMS

1. Hardware

(a) Input (terminal, digitizer, etc.)

(b) Processing and storage unit

(c) Output (printer, plotter, etc.)

2. Operating system

|_| VMS

|_| UNIX

|_| DOS

|_| OS2

|_| Other Specify _____

3. Database management system or other software

4. Is demonstration material (e.g. diskettes, tapes, etc.) available?

|_| Yes

|_| No

If "yes", is the demo available for a PC?

|_| Yes

|_| No

5. Have you arranged or would you be ready to organize a training course at your toponymic database?

|_| Have arranged

|_| Would be ready to

|_| No

G. DOCUMENTATION OF TOPONYMIC DATABASES

1. Is documentation available?

|_| Yes

|_| No

If "yes",

(a) In what language(s)?

(b) In which format?

|_| Hard copy

|_| Digital

(c) What type?

|_| User manual

|_| Report

2. Is the information in your database available for sale?

|_| Yes

|_| No

If "yes",

(a) Have you established rules for acquisition and distribution of data?

|_| Yes

|_| No

Comments:

(b) Are your products

|_| Standard packages?

|_| Customized packages?

|_| Both?

(c) Do you have follow-up service wih clients who have received your data?

|_| Yes

|_| No

H. TOPONYMIC DATABASE DEVELOPMENT

What help do you need to establsh/develop a toponymic database for your country?

|_| Developing card and file system

|_| Developing a PC-based system

|_| Developing a mini-computer system

|_| Deciding on appropriate international standards to use for computerized data storage and exchange

|_| Other

Comments:

I. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Please include any additional comments that you may wish to provide on your database:

Please send this form to:

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